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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: SHAKE UP ANTICIPATED AT RULING NDP

Classified by ECPO Counselor Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Reports that a substantial internal shake up of the ruling National Democratic Party was in the works gained momentum on January 30 when leading pro-government papers Akhbar and Gomhouriya repeated earlier claims by Al-Masry Al-Youm, Egypt's most prestigious independent daily, that an NDP house cleaning was imminent. The two pro-government papers reported that members of the party's younger "reform camp" will be given more positions of power and that veteran old guard politician Kamal el-Shazly, dismissed from the cabinet at the end of 2005, will be relieved of his posts as Assistant NDP Secretary-General and Party Secretary for Membership.

12. (C) Although Al-Masry Al-Youm earlier reported that veteran machine politician Shazly would be relieved of his jobs as Membership Secretary and Assistant Secretary-General, the two pro-government papers reported today that he would assume the previously non-existent position of party "Vice Chairman." (Comment: It is too early to say whether this move, if fulfilled, would be a promotion or a face-saving demotion for Shazly. End comment.) The papers also stated that Ahmed Ezz, an MP and steel tycoon in his mid 40s, would replace Shazly in the position of Secretary for Membership. Ezz ran President Mubarak's reelection campaign and is close to presidential son, and (presumed) aspiring successor, Gamal Mubarak.

13. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador on the afternoon of January 30, NDP Secretary General (and Shura Council Speaker) Safwat el-Sherif confirmed that a party house-cleaning would take place "within hours." Sherif's relaxed, jovial demeanor suggested that press reports stating that he would remain in place as the party's SYG were accurate. While Sherif declined to confirm to the Ambassador the specific personnel changes detailed in the media, he stated that there would be broad changes across the party's 14 secretariats, and that many members of the party's younger generation would be moving in to positions of responsibility.

14. (C) Sherif added that personnel changes among party secretaries would come in the context of an overall

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restructuring effort, beginning with the party's "politburo." After the restructuring, he stated, all 14 party secretaries would all be elevated to the level of Assistant Secretary-General. (Previously there was only one Assistant

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Secretary-General (Shazly)). There will also be major

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changes in the party's lower tiers, Sherif added, stating that the NDP aimed to recruit and empower more youth and "strengthen its connections to the people."

15. (C) Comment: A party house cleaning is long overdue, particularly in light of the NDP's miserable performance in the November-December parliamentary elections. Party nominees won only 41 percent of the races they competed (in contrast to more than 60 percent of MB candidates. The real significance of upcoming changes in the NDP remains to be seen. The ascendancy of Ezz, if fulfilled, could strengthen the hand of Gamal Mubarak and his "reform camp," who suffered a set-back when they failed to place reformists in the party's parliamentary candidate slate in the fall. However, the continued presence of Sherif (and Shazly) at the top of the party, if also fulfilled, would inevitably check the reformists' influence. End comment.

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